USDA United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Dixie National Forest Escalante Ranger District | 755 West Main Escalante, UT 84726-0246 435-826-5400

Allotment Management Plan

for the

Sand Creek Allotment

Escalante Ranger District – Dixie National Forest – Region 4

Management Plan Prepared by: Kimberly DeLatte **Date:** 9/23/11
Rangeland Management Specialist

Reviewed By: _____ **Date:** _____
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Reviewed By: _____ **Date:** _____
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Reviewed By: _____ **Date:** _____
Kelly Roundy (Permittee)

Reviewed By: _____ **Date:** _____
Robison Ranch LLC (Permittee)

Approved by: _____ **Date:** 12/20/11
District Ranger

This Allotment Management Plan is hereby made a part of your Term Grazing Permit and is incorporated in Part 3 of that permit.

Sand Creek Allotment Management Plan
Escalante Ranger District
Dixie National Forest

I. Introduction

A.Authority - The Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA), as amended by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) allows for Allotment Management Plans (AMP's) to be included in grazing permits at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture (43 U.S.C. 1752(d), as amended by 92 Stat. 1803 (1978)). The Secretary has elected to exercise this discretion, and has delegated his authority to issue regulations in this area to the Chief of the Forest Service (36 CFR 222.1 et.seq.).

B.Definition - An Allotment Management Plan is defined in FLPMA as a document prepared in consultation with lessees or permittees applying to livestock operations on the public lands prescribing: 1) the manner in and extent to which livestock operations will be conducted in order to meet multiple use, sustained-yield economic and other needs and objectives, 2) range improvements to be installed and maintained, such other provisions relating to livestock grazing and other objectives found by the Secretary to be consistent with the provisions of the FLPMA (43 USC 1702(k), 36 CFR 222.1 (b) (2), and FSM 1023).

C.History – Cattle and sheep grazing have played an important part in the history of the Boulder area.

The Sand Creek allotment is the result of many additions and deletions of various allotments over the years. The east side of the allotment was the original Boulder C&H. In the late 40's the Sand Creek, Sweetwater and Salt Gulch S&G allotments were combined with the old Boulder C&H. In 1975 all of Burr Top and a portion of Sand Creek were taken from the Pine Creek C&H and added to the Boulder C&H.

Prior to 1959 there was limited management on the allotment. Serious range deterioration from overstocking and a lack of management had occurred. Attempts to correct these problems included reseedings, fence construction and water developments. Several reductions and changes in the grazing seasons were made to bring numbers in line with the available grazing resource.

In 1959 the permittees signed an agreement providing for some extensive fence construction and revegetation work. The allotment started to receive some deferment and a sizeable reduction was made in livestock numbers. This agreement required a system of rest rotation be worked out. Fourteen pastures were initially used. Several adaptions were tried between 1959 and 1969 to work out problems. In 1970 the season was set from June 16 to September 30. The allotment was divided into two divisions, Sand Creek and Boulder, with three pastures each. A firm rest rotation system of grazing was then initiated. This initially met with resistance from several permittees but the association agreed to give it a fair trial. There is now acceptance of the system.

During the period from 1971-1975 a 15 day temporary extension was given at the end of each grazing season. This was made a part of the term permits in 1976.

In 1995 the current Sand Creek allotment (Bear Creek, Sweetwater and Sand Creek pastures) was officially divided, even though they had been managed separately since 1970, from the current Boulder allotment (Short Neck, Deer Lake, Between the Creeks, and Nazor Draw pastures).

D. Current Management – The Sand Creek allotment consists of approximately 47,241 acres of National Forest System lands. The allotment is managed using a 3 unit deferred rotation grazing system. Currently five permittees are permitted to graze 754 head of cattle (cow/calf) during a season of 6/16 through 10/15. Range improvements include 4 fences totaling approximately 14.5 miles in length; 1 water development with head box, 1.4 miles of pipeline, 1 dirt tank, and 1 trough; and one corral.

II. Goals & Objectives, Desired Resource Condition, Standards & Guidelines

A. Goals and Objectives (Desired Condition)

1. Achieve or maintain satisfactory range conditions on all rangelands (Dixie NF LRMP IV-37). Satisfactory range condition on a site is defined as meeting or moving toward desired condition. A downward vegetation and/or soil trend (site is moving away from desired condition) would also cause further evaluation and/or change in management direction (Dixie NF LRMP V-6).

Desired Condition

Uplands

- Maintain minimum ground cover on uplands as specified in the current Dixie National Forest Supplement to FSH 2209.21 – Rangeland Ecosystem Analysis and Management Handbook Chapter 20 – Rangeland Inventory and Analysis. (Range Vegetation Condition and Trend - measurement of ground cover and soil stability -Monitoring and Evaluation Program, Dixie NF LRMP V-6)

- Maintain the relative frequency or cover of invasive plants at less than 10 percent on uplands not affected by fire or already infested by invasive plants. (Range Vegetation Condition and Trend - measurement of plant composition and vigor - Monitoring and Evaluation Program, Dixie NF LRMP V-6).

- Maintain a plant composition overall resource value rating of greater than "low" on all uplands not affected by fire or already infested by invasive plants. (Range Vegetation Condition and Trend - measurement of plant composition and vigor - Monitoring and Evaluation Program, Dixie NF LRMP V-6).

Riparian Areas

- All riparian areas are moving toward or are being maintained in at least an upper mid-seral successional stage. (≥60% of potential)

- Maintain 50 percent or more of total stream-bank length in stable condition (Dixie NF LRMP IV-33). This will be interpreted as maintaining 50 percent of all riparian areas with at least a moderate bank stability rating

Management Tools Used to Accomplish Desired Condition

- Range utilization standards: Provide a stocking level and system of range management that will not exceed the LRMP Maximum Allowable Forage Use Criteria. (see ppg. 5-6 below)

- Riparian management: Provide a stocking level, system of management, season of use, and necessary improvements that will protect riparian areas. (see ppg. 5-6 below for Maximum Allowable Forage Use Criteria)

2. Protection of threatened, endangered and sensitive plant and animal species: Provide a season of use and utilization level that will protect population of sensitive plants and animals. Protection of plants must allow for sufficient seed production to maintain or improve current populations.

3. Control or eradicate Class A and Class B (Utah Noxious Weed Act) noxious weed infestations as they occur on the allotment using the concepts of Integrated Pest Management.

B. Summary of Existing Resource Conditions

Since 2005 there have been 10 USFS Upland Trend Studies, 4 Riparian Level III Greenline Studies, 2 UDWR Big Game Range Studies (the Salt Gulch study has been suspended & the New Home Bench study does not get utilized by livestock from this allotment) and 2 Photopoints established on the Sand Creek allotment. The upland trend and greenline studies show an overall average ground cover of 72.2% with three study sites not meeting the recommended desired condition for ground cover. The upland trend studies show all sites meeting the recommended desired condition for weedy/ invasives (<10%). The upland trend studies show all but one (this one study has a Low RVR) study meeting the most recent recommended desired condition for Resource Value Rating (RVR) (< Low or Medium rating). The upland trend studies show all but one (this one study has a 494 VFI and desired condition is 500) study meeting the most recent recommended desired condition for Vegetation Frequency Index (VFI). Both photo-points are meeting the most recent recommended desired conditions. And of the four greenline studies, one is in a Very Early Seral condition, one is in an Early Seral condition, one is in a Mid Seral condition and one is at Potential Natural Community, all with a Moderate to Good (High) stream-bank stability rating. Average utilization across the allotment from 1995-2010 is 41.5% on herbaceous upland species, 18.25% on woody browse species, and 5" average stubble height on riparian herbaceous species.

C. Land and Resource Management Plan Standards and Guidelines

The Dixie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) approved in 1986 outlines the Standards and Guidelines that will be achieved through future management activities

on the Dixie National Forest. The following Standards and Guidelines will be implemented through this Allotment Management Plan:

- **Range**

1. Provide forage to sustain local dependent livestock industry. (IV-36)
2. Remove livestock from allotments for the remainder of the grazing season when proper use is reached. (IV-36)
3. On rangeland in less than satisfactory condition, remove livestock when recovery of range condition cannot be accomplished by the grazing system.(IV-112)
4. Invest in cost effective grazing management and associated range improvements.
5. Invest in cost effective grazing management and rangeland productivity improvement, where improvements include water developments, and where water right is in the name of the United States. (IV-112)
    A. Structural improvement will not adversely affect big game movement. Reference FSM 2541.23.
6. Control noxious farm weeds in the following priority:
    A. Musk thistles, Scotch thistle, Canada thistle.
    B. Invasion of new plant species classified as noxious farm weeds;
    C. Infestation in new areas;
    D. Expansion of existing infestations of Scotch, Musk and Canada thistle, and other noxious farm weeds; and
    E. Reduce acreage of current infestation. (IV-37)

- **Range Improvements**

1. Structural range improvements should be developed to benefit both wildlife and livestock.
    A. Structural improvements and maintenance will be in accordance with FSM 2209.22 (R-4) and 2609.11. (IV-37)
2. To facilitate the control of soil erosion within acceptance tolerance, soil survey or site specific soils data will be used to develop revegetation projects.(IV-37)

- **Recreation**

1. Manage livestock grazing to enhance recreation opportunities in existing and proposed recreation sites.
    A. Construct fences of material other than barbed mire around developed sites. (IV-59,61)
2. Exclude grazing of recreational stock and livestock in developed recreation sites.
    A. Maintain vegetation in fair or better range condition.(IV,59)
3. Manage livestock distribution and stocking rates to be compatible with recreation use. Locate Structural improvements to meet Visual Quality Objectives. (IV-65)

III. Management Actions

A. Management System

1. Livestock Grazing System

The Sand Creek Allotment is managed using a three unit deferred rotation grazing system. All units are used each year. The rotation is as follows:

YEAR	Graze 1st	Graze 2nd	Graze 3rd
One	Bear Creek	Sweetwater	Sand Creek
Two	Sand Creek	Sweetwater	Bear Creek

Actual entry and exit dates depend on factors such as forage development, soil condition, proper use determinations and joint monitoring. Permittees would be notified and cattle moved to the next unit or removed from the National Forest when the Forest Officer judges the unit or allotment to be at proper use.

2. Utilization Standard Criteria

Dixie NF - Maximum Allowable Forage Use Criteria					
UTILIZATION BY SERAL STAGE					
Vegetation Type	Very Early	Early	Mid	Late	Comments * SH = Stubble Height
Riparian Hydric Species	6" SH	6" SH	4" SH	4" SH	Remaining at end of growing season
Riparian Emphasis Management Areas	6" SH	6" SH			Remaining at end of growing season
Hydric Species in wet meadows not influenced by streams	6" SH	6" SH	4" SH	4" SH	Remaining at end of growing season
Non-hydric Species in Riparian Areas	2" SH	2" SH	2" SH	2" SH	Remaining at end of growing season
Upland Species	50%	50%	50%	50%	Varying in specific unit from 40-60%
Wheatgrass Seedings	60%	60%	60%	60%	Management option to exceed 60% use to maintain healthy seedings
Riparian Browse	<50%				New Leader Production
Streambanks	<20% disturbance				Sloughing, trampling, dislodged stones, animal tracks
Where it is determined through the landscape assessment process that ungulate grazing is contributing to an identified functioning at risk condition relative to habitat needed to support goshawk and its prey; the following utilization standards will be implemented.					
Goshawk Post-Fledgling Family Areas (PFAs)	Pond Pine/ Mixed Species	Grass/Forb	Avg 20% NTE 40%		Applies in up to 2-acre openings in 600-acre areas
Goshawk Post-Fledgling Family Areas (PFAs)	Pond Pine/ Mixed Species	Shrub	Avg 40% NTE 50%		Applies in up to 2-acre openings in 600-acre areas
Goshawk Post-Fledgling	Spruce-Fir	Grass/Forb	Avg 20%		Applies in up to 1-acre

Family Areas (PFAs)			NTE 40%	openings in 600-acre areas
Goshawk Post-Fledgling Family Areas (PFAs)	Spruce-Fir	Shrub	Avg 40% NTE 50%	Applies in up to 1-acre openings in 600-acre areas
Goshawk Foraging Areas	Pond Pine/ Mixed Species	Grass/Forb	Avg 20% NTE 40%	Applies in up to 4-acre openings in 6000-acre areas
Goshawk Foraging Areas	Pond Pine/ Mixed Species	Shrub	Avg 40% NTE 50%	Applies in up to 4-acre openings in 6000-acre areas
Goshawk Foraging Areas	Spruce-Fir	Grass/Forb	Avg 20% NTE 40%	Applies in up to 1-acre openings in 6000-acre areas
Goshawk Foraging Areas	Spruce-Fir	Shrub	Avg 40% NTE 50%	Applies in up to 1-acre openings in 6000-acre areas

B. Livestock Management

1. No livestock will be allowed on Forest lands until range readiness as determined by the Forest Service has been reached.
2. All improvements (range facilities) on the allotment will be maintained by the assigned permittee (as provided for in Part 2, 8i of the Term Grazing Permit) to a condition adequate to perpetuate the life of the facility and to serve the purpose intended. Reconstruction of improvements will be completed as determined necessary by the District Ranger and as funds are available.
3. Permittee is required to provide a rider/herder to achieve proper distribution and management of the livestock.
4. Utilization will be followed as prescribed. When the prescribed use level is reached livestock will be moved to the next unit or off the allotment.
5. Numbers and season of use will be adjusted annually if determined necessary by the District Ranger.
6. Distribution is critical as utilization is approached you will be required to move to the next unit. Therefore, it is vital that the herd be moved daily out of areas of high concentration to areas typicaly ignored. Do not allow livestock to concentrate at historically used areas. Strays will not be allowed to stay in previously grazed units and will be moved promptly.
7. Salt will be located at least 1/4 mile from water troughs, springs, ponds, lakes, wet meadows and riparian areas. Salt will be moved from areas where feed has been used to standards. (IV-37)
8. All improvements will be constructed by cost-sharing between the permittees and the Forest Service unless otherwise specified. Maximum share of improvements by the government will be 50%.
9. All springs will be scheduled for fenceing to protect the spring source. Expenses for construction will be cost shared.
10. Fences will be designed and located to consider wildlife and visual impacts.
11. All stock water troughs will have small animal escape features installed.
12. Permittees will be required to notify the Forest Service when animals enter the Forest and when they leave at the end of the season.
13. Existing fences will be extended or modified where needed in order to provide a complete barrier to livestock movement.

14. As documented in the EA, cultural resource surveys will need to be conducted for all ground disturbing activities prior to their implementation as part of the selected alternative.
15. Carcasses of dead livestock on National Forest lands will be removed by the owner for a distance of at least three-hundred (300) feet from any live water and one-hundred (100) feet from any trailhead or recreation trail. Carcasses will be removed for a distance of at least five-hundred (500) feet from any campground or picnic area.
16. Prohibit trailing of livestock along the length of riparian areas. Relocate stock driveways where found in riparian areas. Rehabilitate damaged riparian areas to achieve riparian-area goals.

C. Noxious Weed Prevention Practices

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
INTERMOUNTAIN REGION
ALL NATIONAL FORESTS

Weed Free Hay Order

PROHIBITIONS:

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50 (a) and (b), and 36 CFR 261.58(t), a Regional Forester may prohibit possessing, storing, or transporting any part of a tree or other plant, as specified in the Order. By this Order, the following acts are prohibited on the area, roads, and trails as described in this order, all within National Forest System Lands within the Intermountain Region until further notice:

1. Possessing, storing, or transporting, non-pelletized hay, straw or mulch on National Forest System Lands without having each individual bale or container tagged or marked as weed free, or having original and current evidence of weed free certification documentation present. All markings must meet the State and/or County standards for certification as weed free.

EXEMPTIONS:

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50 (e) the following persons are exempt from this order:

1. Persons with a permit specifically authorizing them from the effect of this Order.
2. Any member of an organized rescue force in the performance of an official duty.

AREA DESCRIBED:

All National Forest System Lands within the boundaries of the Intermountain Region that include the Ashley, Boise, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, Dixie, Fishlake, Humboldt-Toiyabe, Manti-Lasal, Payette, Salmon-Challis, Sawtooth, Uinta and Wasatch-Cache National Forests.

PURPOSE:

The above prohibition is necessary to prevent the spread of noxious weeds into a vulnerable ecosystem on National Forest System lands.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. This Order will be in effect when signed and shall remain in effect until further notice.

2. Any violation of this prohibition is punishable by a fine of not more than $5,000 for an individual or $10,000, for an organization, and/or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months. [Title 16 USC 551, Title 18 USC 3571(b)(6), Title 18 USC 3581 (b)(7)].
3. This Order supersedes any previous orders prohibiting the same, or similar, acts in the above described areas.

Done at Ogden, Utah this 11th day of February 2003.

JACK G. TROYER

JACK G. TROYER
Regional Forester
Intermountain Region

Order Number: 04-00-097

D. Rangeland (structural & non-structural) Improvement Program

The Sand Creek allotment does not currently require new structural range improvements (fences or water developments) to properly manage, distribute, and/or control livestock, except for the following:

- Completion of the Lake Creek fence by building fence, from its current northern end, north up to and into McGath Lake.

However, provision is included for maintenance of both existing structural and non-structural range improvements. Vegetation type-conversions (sagebrush and pinyon-juniper to grass/forb types) are subject to periodic maintenance. New vegetation treatment projects (non-structural improvements), on previously un-treated sites, may be required to maintain proper functioning condition and management of vegetation ecosystems. These projects should be conducted through appropriate NEPA planning and analyses on a site-specific basis. The reseeded areas are to be maintained for optimum forage production. Juniper will not be allowed to invade the seedings, and ground cover will be increased where possible over current conditions.

IV. Monitoring and Evaluation

A) Effectiveness and Validation Monitoring

Objective	Item to monitor	Methods/Parameters	Frequency/Duration*	Reporting Procedures	Responsibility
Measure condition and trend of vegetation on key areas** (effectiveness)	Monitor vegetation diversity including density, vigor, and distribution of plants.	Nested frequency transect or equivalent established in key areas	5-10 year interval	Summary of transect data, brief evaluation of trend and photographic record. File is located in 2210 files	Forest Botanist or District Rangeland Management Specialist
Measure utilization levels at key areas on all units. *** (implementation)	Total forage utilization	Paired plot method and Ocular estimate by plot, key forage plant method	Annually	Summary of transect data, narrative summary of findings and photographic record. File is located in 2210 files	District Rangeland Management Specialist
Determine watershed conditions on key areas on the allotment (validation)	1.) Monitor vegetation diversity including density, vigor, and distribution of plants, and 2.) effective ground cover and soil stability.	Nested frequency transects or equivalent established on key areas.	5-10 year interval	Summary of transect data, brief evaluation of trend and photographic record. File is located in 2210 files	Forest Botanist or District Rangeland Management Specialist

*Frequency/Duration of monitoring items may vary dependent upon need, budget constraints, etc. that have come up or will come up since completion of the 11/07/1994 EA.

** 1. Maintain, re-read and re-photograph the following ground cover, photo points, 3' X 3' photo plots and/or nested frequency studies at least every 5-10years.

a) 6082 Pretty Tree Bench
b) 6090 Boulder Swale
c) 6098 Boulder Swale Exclosure
d) 7035 Pretty Tree Bench II
e) 7090 Cuddyback Lake
f) 8078 Side Hollow
g) 8081 Grimes Creek PP
h) 8134 Lower Boulder Swale
i) 8136 Burr Top
j) 8137 Dry Lake
k) 8138 Road Draw

l) 8179 Purple Lake II PP

2. Re-read the following Riparian Level III Greenline studies every 5-10 years.

a) 7087 Sweetwater Creek Greenline
b) 7091 Lake Creek Meadow
c) 8073 Bear Creek
d) 8080 Grimes Creek

***Short-Term Monitoring Key Areas

Key Area	Pasture	Location
Boulder Swale	Sand Creek	N38 02.527 W111 34.686
Dry Lake	Sweetwater	N38 00.237 W111 32.221
McGath Lake	Sand Creek	N37 59.000 W111 33.817
Sweetwater	Sweetwater	N37 59.631 W111 31.233
Road Draw	Bear Creek	N37 59 29.3 W111 30 48.5
Bear Creek GL	Bear Creek	N37 59 46.9 W111 29 37.1
RoundUp Flat/Lake Creek GL	Sweetwater	N37 57 59.0 W111 33 17.7

These are the current key areas and could change based on livestock use patterns, new developments, etc.

B) Annual Operating Instructions

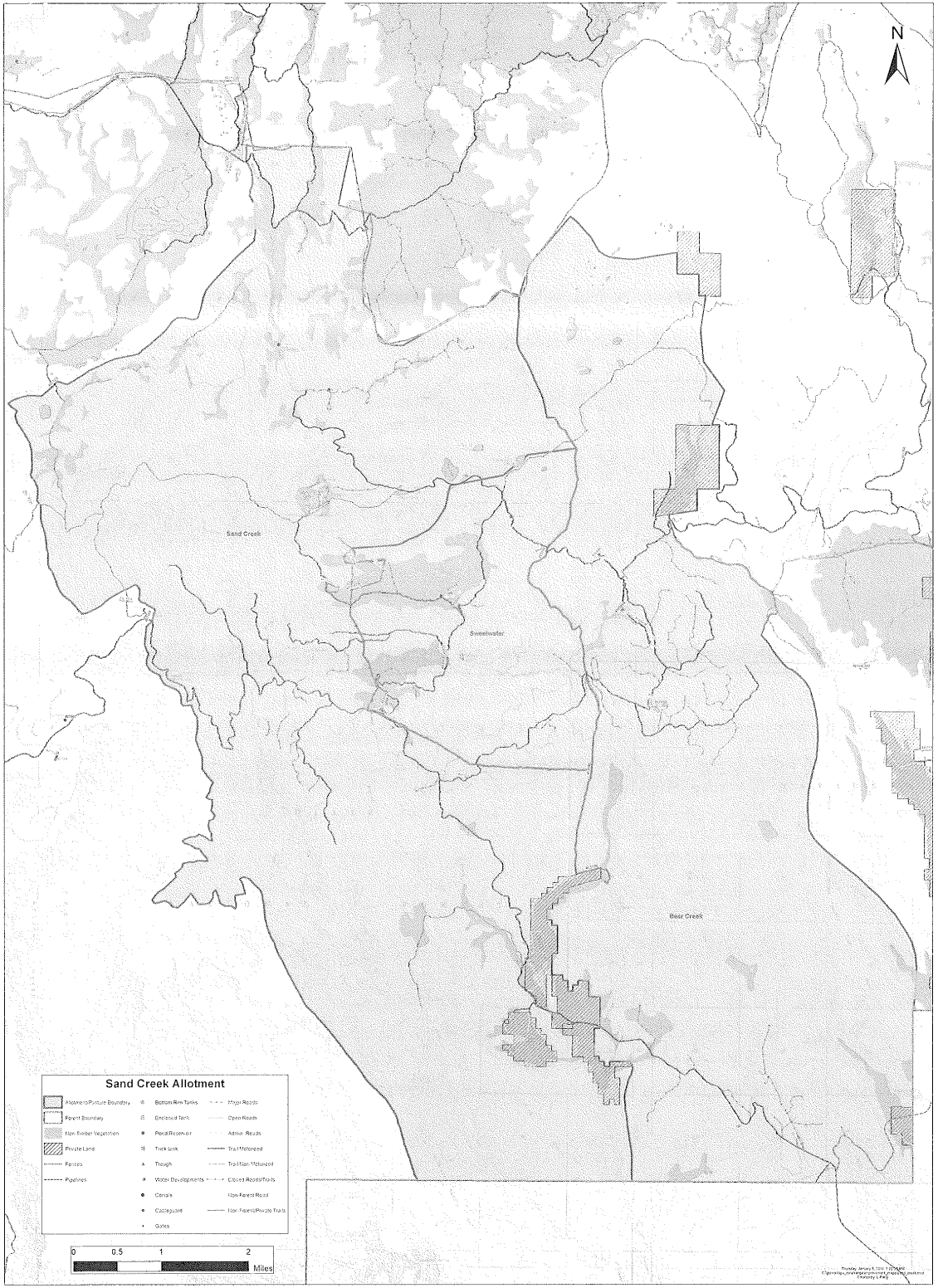
The Forest Officer will develop Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) each year. The AOI will be based on this Allotment Management Plan. The AOI will detail the current season's management schedule, rangeland development program, and use of key areas. These instructions will implement adaptive management in response to the results of the long-term studies. The AOI will become a part of the permit.

IIV. Improvements

See part three of the term grazing permit for an up to date list of the current range improvements and maintenance responsibilities.

IIIV. Graphics and Appendices

A. Allotment Boundary/Range Improvement Map (attached)


N
Sand Creek
Sweetwater
Bear Creek
Sand Creek Allotment
Allotment/Pasture Boundary
Forest Boundary
Non-forest Vegetation
Private Land
Fences
Pipelines
Bottom Rim Tanks
Enclosed Tank
Pond/Reservoir
Trick tank
Trough
Water Developments
Corrals
Cattleguard
Gates
Major Roads
Open Roads
Admin. Roads
Trail Motorized
Trail Non-Motorized
Closed Roads/Trails
Non-Forest Road
Non-Forest/Private Trails
0
0.5
1
2
Miles